

4. A PRACTICAL EXAMPLE

Simple but not Easy

Opposites Often Attract in Relationships

The Box-Turtle: In many relationships one person is naturally quiet and reserved. During tense conversations this person may withdraw, mentally “close up,” or struggle to find words. Their instinct is to avoid conflict. When guided by love, these qualities can be valuable. The Box-Turtle may help slow things down, prevent emotional escalation, and suggest postponing a conversation until emotions settle. Taking time to reflect, gather information, or write out thoughts can sometimes lead to a calmer and wiser discussion later.

The Parrot: The other person may naturally be more verbal and expressive. They often want to talk through problems right away in order to understand and resolve them. In conflict, the Parrot may speak quickly, intensely, and at length. Yet when guided by love, these qualities can also be helpful. If both people were Box-Turtles, many important issues might never be discussed or resolved. The Parrot’s willingness to engage can bring hidden tensions into the open where they can be addressed.

The Struggle Between Them:

If the Parrot becomes too forceful, fast, or emotionally intense, the Box-Turtle often feels overwhelmed and withdraws even more.

But when the Box-Turtle closes up or avoids the conversation, the Parrot may feel rejected, ignored, or hurt, which can make them talk even more intensely in an effort to break through the silence.

Learning the Balance: For communication to improve, both people must let love guide their natural tendencies.

The **Parrot** needs to learn restraint—speaking thoughtfully, slowing down, and leaving space for the other person to think and respond.

The **Box-Turtle** needs to risk opening up—sharing thoughts and feelings rather than retreating into silence.

Both partners must also be careful not to assume or judge each other’s motives. The Parrot may assume the Box-Turtle “doesn’t care,” while the Box-Turtle may assume the Parrot is “attacking.”

A Deeper Source of Love:

If each person expects the other *imperfect* human being to supply all the love they need, frustration follows. Healthy relationships grow when both people draw from a deeper, transcendent source of love —and allow that love to guide how they speak, listen, and respond to one another.

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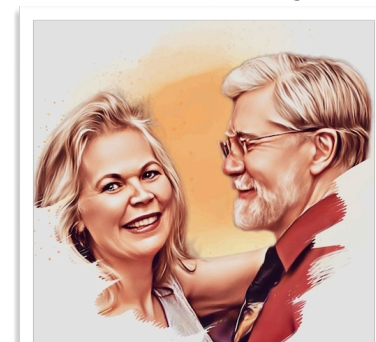
A Simple Process for
Communicating

Heart to Heart

- to understand - *not* to “win”



Blind Bartley the duck that
loves music & hugs



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1. THE GOAL

To Understand Co-Operate & Benefit (NOT to "win" or to "control")

ANY "Goal" or purpose for communication reveals the inner heart motive or attitude of the person choosing that goal. The highest motive is an attitude of humility, unselfishness, and compassion for all "others", even for enemies.

It's the motive of strong, stable Agape-Love. It's goal is to try & understand the person's heart & help that person grow into a mature soul who also chooses to live and give agape-love to others.

NO, that doesn't mean letting another person get whatever that person "wants" or "desires". But it does mean to do whatever YOU can, to help that person receive & become what are true "needs". The central, universal, core "need" for all of us is to become a person of Agape-Love. It's the only "way" to true joy & to a stable inner peace that's NOT dependent on circumstances.

BUT, what if the other person is hurtful & acts hurtful — like an enemy, not a friend? Is it wise to react & respond back as an equal enemy trying to "win"? Of course not, because that will simply tempt the other person to act even worse to you.

STRONG, humble, compassionate, agape-Love is the most powerful way to change an enemy into a friend. When you're full and overflowing with agape-love, nothing the other person says, sounds like or looks like can "cause" you to react.

2. THE PROBLEM

(we're all infected with selfishness)

SYMPTOMS like arguing or hurtful reactions are not the "cause" of people-problems. "Symptoms" are merely the outer "fruit" of an inner "root" — a motive (goal/purpose) that lacks agape-love.

ROOT "causes" of ineffective, hurtful, destructive communication are motives/attitudes that seek to serve & protect "self", even at the expense of the other person's real "needs".

INFLUENCES that "tempt" us to act, sound, & look like an enemy instead of a loving friend can be internal (headache, lack of sleep, etc.) or external (stress at work, kids acting up all day, etc.). But these are NOT causes that force us to fail to live agape-love. They're just temptations.

PERSONALITIES communicate differently & can "tempt" us to assume the another person is insensitive, uncaring, etc. Examples: assertive vs. passive, open vs. reserved, verbal vs. quiet, etc. Yet opposites attract & can adapt to one another to co-operate for the common goal of agape-love.

VICIOUS-CYCLES of wrong assumptions, misunderstandings, unloving reactions (words, tones, face, body language), hurt feelings, angry attitudes, bitterness, & division are the end result of a lack of agape-love. We must draw from the Source.

"There is a way that seems right,
but it ends in destruction" (Prov. 14:15).

3. THE PROCESS

The Way of Agape Communication (humble unselfish compassion)

Here's a few **PRINCIPLES** to always apply:

CHOOSE a loving motive & goal, in order to understand the person's heart — NOT to "win".

BUILD bridges of mutual agreement. DON'T focus on disagreements. That builds barriers.

"LISTEN" (Rearrange the letters = "SILENT") So, be quick to hear and slow to speak. Control your face, tone, & body to communicate love.

UNDERSTAND — DO NOT "ASSUME".

- Ask the other person questions to be sure you understand what the person is trying to say.
- Repeat back to the person what you think you're hearing (Example - "Are you saying").
- Keep trying until the person says: "YES! That's what I've been trying to get you to understand."
- Only then is it fair for you to agree or disagree.
- Even disagreements should clearly look like love.

PATIENCE is vital & yes you CAN do it. Rushing the process of communication is never good.

FORGIVENESS should be asked for if you fail to show obvious love. "Please forgive me for failing to live love in that moment." Anger rightly expressed in love looks more like "grief" not hate. And GIVE for-give-ness to others as needed.